The Oil Companies are competent to take decision on reconstitution proposal and Government need not investigate into the matter**.**

Slow Progress in oil exploration

2491. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA': Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process of oil exploration has slowed down and many sites to oil findings have not been found during the last three years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the number of sites which have been identified during this period; and

(d) the steps taken to start commercial exploration from these sites?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) and (d) During the last three years from 1999—2002, National Oil Companies (NOCs) and private/joint venture companies have made 42 new hydrocarbons finds. Out of these new finds, 13 have already been put on production. In the remaining "finds"; further assessment/delineation and appraisal through acquisition/processing of seismic data, drilling and detailed testing of wells are to be carried out before putting them on to production.